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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8548
INFO RHMFISS/CDR USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL//SCJ2//
RULGPIA/USCOMSOLANT

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 001266

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STATE FOR INR/R/MR, I/GWHA, WHA, WHA/PDA, WHA/BSC,
WHA/EPSC
CDR USSOCOM FOR J-2 IAD/LAMA

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E.O. 12958: N/A
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; ACNUR REPORT; US IMMIGRATION REFORM;
MERCOSUR; 06/29/07

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Today's leading international stories include the UN High Commissioner's Report "2006 World Tendencies Report;" the status of the US immigration reform bill; and what Mercosur needs to operate efficiently.

2. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

- "More refugees due to wars"

Leading "Clarín" editorializes (06/29) "According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the number of refugees all over the world increased last year, particularly due to the disaster sparked by the war in Iraq.

"The UNHCR '2006 World Tendencies' report reveals that there are almost 10 million refugees, the highest number during the last five years...

"The main reasons for this massive uprooting are: persecutions, humanitarian catastrophes, and conflicts in countries that are engaged in civil war. Just the war in Iraq has created one and a half million new refugees.

"... The military intervention of foreign powers has done nothing but take the problem to unprecedented levels."

- "Bush suffers a tough legislative blow"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nación," comments (06/29) "President George W. Bush's plan to turn the overhaul of the outdated US immigration system into the greatest achievement of his second term in office collapsed yesterday when it was rejected by a decisive coalition of Republican and Democratic senators that asked for stricter guidelines as an inevitable step to make progress on it.

"The immigration reform has indefinitely been put off. No one in this city believes it could be tackled before the November 2008 elections, that is to say, until a new president takes over.

"The failure of the draft bill promoted by (US President) Bush and Democratic Senator Edward Kennedy will keep nearly 12 million undocumented immigrants in the shadows of illegality...

"Bush said that 'illegal immigration is one of the US people's main concerns, and the failure of Capitol Hill to deal with it is disappointing.' For the first time, Bush seemed to resign himself to failure on this front.

"... The blow had a strong impact on the White House that had turned the overhaul of the US immigration legislation into its most precious domestic goal now that the war in Iraq is depriving it of oxygen every passing day. However, the immigration reform bill ended up being one more step for Bush in his role of 'lame duck'..."

- "A bloc to be preserved"

Nestor Restivo, columnist for leading "Clarín," comments (06/29)
"Commercially, the heart of Mercosur is a string of cities from São Paulo and Rio at one extreme to Santiago de Chile, on the other, passing through Southern Brazil, Asunción, Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Rosario, Córdoba and other cities, in addition to their rural belts and ports.

"Nonetheless, if one seeks to add energy wealth, a key asset in current global economy..., the presence of Venezuela, as well as Bolivia, is crucial. Everything else is rhetoric and pure politics from everyone, those who favor it and those who oppose it.

"Chavez should accept that Mercosur works through consensus and that it should be preserved. The other leaders should include a social agenda and establish stronger guidelines if they want something else other than bureaucracy and business or, even worse, a bloc that some day could be surrounded by angry demonstrators at every single summit."

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